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Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

Follow-up audit of the policies and procedures of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for recruiting international civilian staff for field missions

Note by the Secretary-General

1. Pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 48/218 B of 29 July 1994, 54/244 of 23 December 1999 and 57/322 of 11 July 2003, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit, for the attention of the General Assembly, the attached report, conveyed to him by the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services, on the follow-up audit of the policies and procedures of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for recruiting international civilian staff for field missions.

2. The Secretary-General takes note of the findings and concurs with the recommendations made in this report, which will contribute to the implementation of the human resources strategy for peacekeeping operations.

* A/59/50 and Corr.1.

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Follow-up audit of the policies and procedures of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for recruiting international civilian staff for field missions

Summary

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 57/322 of 18 June 2003, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted a follow-up audit of the policies and procedures of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for recruiting international civilian staff for field missions. The audit's main objectives were: to review the implementation of recommendations made in the OIOS report of July 2001 (A/56/202); and to evaluate the progress made by the Department's Personnel Management and Support Service in implementing the recruitment-related aspects of the Department's restructuring agenda arising from the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305-S/2000/809).

Although additional resources had been provided to the Office of Human Resources Management for monitoring the delegated recruitment authority exercised by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Office's monitoring of field recruitment was weak. The expectation that the Galaxy system would allow for continuous monitoring of recruitment actions taken by the Personnel Management and Support Service was not realized because Galaxy had not been used for processing the recruitment of international civilian staff for field missions. OIOS also found instances where certain mission Field Service staff had been converted to the Professional category in contravention of existing restrictions on movement into the Professional category. Likewise, the Office of Human Resources Management had not issued clear policy guidance regarding the Department's practice of "promoting" certain staff members by treating successive mission appointments as independent of each other. Other similarly placed staff, however, were "re-assigned" from one mission to another without a review of their salary level/grade. In the opinion of OIOS, the Office's monitoring of delegated recruitment authority needs to be strengthened considerably through more intensive reviews and provision of appropriate policy guidance to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

Although the Department of Peacekeeping Operations had initiated the major building blocks of the global staffing strategy for field missions, considerable work needed to be done in human resources planning, streamlining the recruitment process, screening applications for inclusion in the roster, expanding the sources of recruitment, and delegating authority to field missions. Many of these tasks were behind schedule. For example, succession planning, which was to be completed by September 2001, is now expected to be completed only by the end of 2004. The Personnel Management and Support Service has not yet established an Intranet/Internet-based roster of candidates from which field missions can select suitable candidates. Some 120,000 applications received in response to the generic vacancy announcements issued through the Galaxy system had not been screened; recruitment procedures were still in draft form; and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations is yet to take tangible steps towards expanding the delegation of recruitment authority beyond the two missions to which recruitment authority had been delegated in the year 2000.

The staff resources of the Personnel Management and Support Service, including those for functions other than field recruitment, increased significantly from 71 posts as at June 2000 to 115 posts in January 2002. This increase was primarily justified by the need to develop the appropriate capacity within the Service to implement the relevant recommendations in the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations. In the opinion of OIOS, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations needs to formulate a realistic timetable for completing the tasks assigned to the Personnel Management and Support Service, and to hold its managers accountable for their completion. The efficiency gains resulting from implementing new information technology systems and delegating recruitment authority to the field should lead to appropriate resizing of the Service's staffing levels based on a reliable assessment of its workload.

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I. Introduction

1. The Personnel Management and Support Service within the Administrative Support Division of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (the Department) is responsible for recruiting international civilian staff for all field missions. In 2000, however, the Department delegated recruitment authority to the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the United Nations Transitional Administration for East Timor (UNTAET) and its successor mission — the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET).

2. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 57/322 of 11 July 2003, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted a follow-up audit of the Department's policies and procedures for recruiting international civilian staff for field missions. The audit was conducted from November 2003 to February 2004, and its main objectives were to: (a) review the implementation of recommendations made in the previous OIOS report of 20 July 2001 (A/56/202); and (b) evaluate the progress made by the Personnel Management and Support Service in implementing the restructuring agenda resulting from the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305-S/2000/809).

3. The Secretary-General emphasized (A/55/977) that the Department's human resources function was critical to the overall success of his reforms. The Department's restructuring agenda included new initiatives aimed at:

(a) Strengthening the human resources management function through development of a global staffing strategy;

(b) Effectively managing the rapid civilian personnel deployment capability;

(c) Revising the conditions of service for field personnel;

(d) Enhancing training and career management;

(e) Delegating additional authority to the field.

4. The Secretary-General identified two key capabilities that needed to be created and staffed — (a) training; and (b) a new human resources planning entity. The latter would provide for succession planning, continuous reassessment of skills requirements and management and maintenance of a roster of pre-vetted candidates and a roster for start-up and standby capacities. Information management systems also needed to be better planned and coordinated to facilitate and support the implementation and management of electronic rosters and planning databases.

5. The current audit focused on the recruitment-related aspects of the Department's reform initiatives. The Office of Internal Oversight Services examined the Personnel Management and Support Service's recruitment policies and practices, conducted walk-throughs, reviewed relevant documentation and interviewed responsible officials of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Office of Human Resources Management. A draft of the present report was made available to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Office of Human Resources Management for review. Their comments are shown in italics.

II. Monitoring role of the Office of Human Resources Management

6. The July 2001 OIOS report (A/56/202) highlighted the need for the Office of Human Resources Management to effectively monitor the recruitment functions delegated to the Personnel Management and Support Service, particularly in view of the recommendations made by the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations that called for further delegation of recruitment authority to field missions. The OIOS report stated that this monitoring effort should include periodic checks of recruitment cases finalized by the Personnel Management and Support Service and those field missions with recruitment authority. The Office of Human Resources Management accepted the OIOS recommendation calling for improved monitoring, and proposed seeking additional resources from the support account for peacekeeping operations. The Office also noted that the Galaxy system being developed in 2001 would allow for continuous monitoring.

7. In October 2001, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions endorsed the provision of additional resources sought by the Office (1 P-5, 1 P-4 and 1 General Service staff) to establish the monitoring capacity (A/56/478). The Office formed a Planning, Monitoring and Reporting Section, which conducted periodic field visits to various missions. These monitoring visits resulted in reports which generally covered all aspects of personnel management in the field and provided feedback on the quality of backstopping support provided by the Personnel Management and Support Service. Although the reports often discussed international civilian staff issues that needed to be addressed by Headquarters, the monitoring visits did not result in the effective oversight of Personnel Management and Support Service recruitment actions. To date, no monitoring report has been issued covering the activities of the Service at Headquarters. As a result, the weaknesses in monitoring identified during the previous OIOS audit persisted. The Office of Internal Oversight Services was informed that the Planning, Monitoring and Reporting Section's work plan for 2004 required the Section to conduct a monitoring visit to the Personnel Management and Support Service.

8. The Office of Human Resources Management's expectation that the Galaxy system would enable continuous monitoring of international recruitment for field missions has not been realized. Unlike posts in the United Nations Secretariat, which are filled through Galaxy, field vacancies are not processed through this system. Thus, the Office could not electronically oversee the recruitment actions taken by the Personnel Management and Support Service. In the opinion of OIOS, this is a significant weakness that needs to be addressed in order to ensure that delegated recruitment authority is exercised in accordance with the Organization's human resources policies.

9. OIOS found instances where appointments of mission staff at the Field Service (FS) 5 level and below were incorrectly converted to the Professional category. When the Personnel Management and Support Service referred one such case to the Office of Human Resources Management in November 2003, the Office expressed concern that this practice circumvented existing restrictions on movement to the

Professional category.[1] Had the Office been monitoring more effectively, such cases could have been detected earlier. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations advised that in February 2004, the Office of Human Resources Management provided written guidance clarifying that only staff at the FS-6 and FS-7 levels would be eligible for consideration against P-3 and P-4 posts, respectively. If an FS-5 staff member were to apply and be selected for a P-3 mission post, he/she would be promoted to the FS-6 level to carry out the functions of the P-3 post, instead of being converted to the Professional category immediately.

10. Clear policy guidance from the Office was also needed concerning the Personnel Management and Support Service's practice of treating successive mission appointments of staff as "independent of each other". That is, when a staff member from one field mission is appointed to a post in another mission, the Service determines the staff member's salary level/grade for the new post without regard to the individual's salary level/grade in the previous mission. This practice is arbitrary and lacks transparency. While some staff members are "re-assigned" without any review of their current salary levels/grades, others are "promoted" to higher levels when they move from one mission to another because they are considered new recruits. OIOS noted that the Office of Human Resources Management has acknowledged the need to examine this practice in connection with the implementation of the Department's human resources strategy. In the view of OIOS, the Office's monitoring of delegated recruitment authority needs to be strengthened considerably through more intensive reviews and the issuance of policy guidance to the Department (recommendations 1 and 2).

III. Global strategy for civilian staffing

A. Elements of the staffing strategy

11. The Human Resources Planning and Development Section of the Personnel Management and Support Service is responsible for developing a global staffing strategy and for managing long-term planning and career development. The development of a global staffing strategy includes providing the conceptual outline of the strategy, defining the resources required and establishing a timeline for its implementation. Elements of the strategy include developing a transparent recruitment system and creating a core standby capacity as a main component of advance planning. In order to identify ways to correct existing weaknesses and prepare for the future, senior managers of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Management, the United Nations Office in Geneva, the United Nations Volunteers programme and the Directors of Administration of a number of field missions prepared a global strategy in May 2001 concerning civilian staffing of peacekeeping missions. The five major building blocks of this strategy were:

(a) Advance planning, including the development of mission modules and templates, updating generic job profiles, and succession planning;

[1] Currently, only staff at the FS-6 and FS-7 levels may be considered for posts at P-3 and P-4 respectively provided that they have served for two years at their current level and meet the academic qualifications required for appointment to the Professional category.

(b) Streamlining the recruitment process, mainly by developing the Galaxy system, rosters, and delegations of authority to the field;

(c) Expanding the sources of recruitment by advertising vacancies and creating memoranda of understanding with United Nations entities, agencies and Member States;

(d) Providing rapid deployment staff by creating stand-by and mission start-up teams;

(e) Retaining staff and improving career management through revision of service and contractual arrangements and comprehensive training programmes.

The present report contains the findings of OIOS pertaining to those elements of the global staffing strategy that are directly related to the recruitment of international civilian staff for field missions.

B. Advance planning

12. The July 2001 OIOS report noted that the absence of standard job descriptions significantly limited the ability of the Personnel Management and Support Service to make informed recruitment decisions. The Office of Human Resources Management noted that it was working with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to develop generic job profiles for various mission posts. During the current audit, OIOS found that the Personnel Management and Support Service had finalized more than 200 generic job profiles, which had been approved by the Office of Human Resources Management.

13. The development of mission modules, templates and succession plans is critical to achieving the goal of effective advance planning of human resource requirements. Mission templates are intended to assist in refining the surge roster of pre-screened, trained and immediately deployable middle/senior administrative staff for the mission start-up and succession planning phases. To date, the Personnel Management and Support Service has developed typical templates for posts in the Divisions of Administration of field missions.

14. Succession plans aim to create a pool of trained staff with the competencies and skills needed to assume senior positions in the foreseeable future. The staffing strategy projected that succession planning would be completed by September 2001. However, completion has been delayed by more than two years and may be further delayed for an additional year. The Personnel Management and Support Service was developing a questionnaire to survey mission staff skills. After administering the questionnaire and analysing the results, the Service expects to complete succession planning only by the end of 2004. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations needs to monitor this effort closely to avoid further delays and to ensure that advance planning is completed before the end of the year.

C. Streamlining the recruitment process

1. Roster of pre-screened candidates

15. The July 2001 OIOS report recommended that the Personnel Management and Support Service, in cooperation with the Office of Human Resources Management,

facilitate the recruitment of the best available candidates in a transparent manner by developing a functional roster of qualified, pre-screened candidates for various categories of posts. Once established, such a roster would have to be reviewed and replenished as needed. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations accepted the OIOS recommendations and stated that the creation of the roster was crucial to achieving transparency and enabling the delegation of authority to field missions. The Office of Human Resources Management indicated that the Galaxy system, which was being developed during 2001, would enable the creation of a fundamentally new roster, which would eliminate the deficiencies of the existing system. The May 2001 staffing strategy outlined measures to streamline the recruitment process by implementing the Galaxy system, building rosters of qualified candidates for field posts and delegating recruitment authority to field missions.

16. The current OIOS review showed that the implementation of the Galaxy system as a web-based tool for advertising field vacancies and inviting applications has enabled the Personnel Management and Support Service to create a large pool of applicants. However, the limitations of the Galaxy system — principally, its inability to electronically sort and select candidates on the basis of specific job-related criteria — have not been effectively addressed. The Service has taken up these problems with the Office of Human Resources Management. In the view of OIOS, merely increasing the number of applicants, without providing the necessary sorting and selecting tools, does not contribute to competitive and efficient recruitment. Instead, Galaxy imposes a heavy burden on human resources officers, who have to review each application manually to match candidate qualifications with the requirements of the post. According to the Personnel Management and Support Service, some 120,000 applications received through Galaxy were yet to be screened, and the roster of candidates in Galaxy was only being used "on a priority and request basis". While "picking and choosing" candidates from the roster, even though it does not include these 120,000 candidates, may be an expedient way of filling vacancies, this approach does not enhance recruitment transparency or provide reasonable assurance that the best available candidates are being recruited (recommendation 3). *The Department of Peacekeeping Operations commented that it has developed an online roster module within the "Nucleus" system (which is a suite of human resources applications based on a data warehouse). The Department is engaged in discussions with the Office of Human Resources Management to identify the best way of integrating Galaxy and the roster module in "Nucleus".*

17. The Personnel Management and Support Service introduced the practice of sending to the concerned missions shortlists of qualified candidates, from which they could make their choice. Although this is an improvement over the recruitment practices used during the time of the previous OIOS audit, missions are insisting that they be given a wider range of candidates from which to choose. OIOS believes that this can only be achieved by ensuring that missions have access to the applications received through the Galaxy system, as is the case at Headquarters, where programme managers have access to applications pertaining to Secretariat vacancies advertised by the Office of Human Resources Management. Therefore, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has not fully implemented the recommendation of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305-S/2000/809) that field missions be given the opportunity to select candidates from an Internet/Intranet-based roster.

2. Delegation of recruitment authority to field missions

18. The May 2001 staffing strategy for peacekeeping operations recognized that introducing greater efficiency and transparency into the recruitment process involved delegating greater authority to field missions, as had been done from 2000 to 2001 at UNMIK and UNTAET on a pilot basis. In his 1 June 2001 report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/977, paras. 161 and 162), the Secretary-General reiterated that delegation of additional recruitment authority to field missions, based on the lessons learned from the delegation of authority to UNMIK and UNTAET, would be a key facet of the strategy of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The Secretary-General also stated that, based on an initial assessment of the results of the pilot, the Department and the Office of Human Resources Management had concluded that written procedures, policy guidelines and monitoring mechanisms needed to be developed to ensure a consistent approach and improved geographic and gender distribution. Delegation of authority was to occur after these procedures and guidelines had been established.

19. However, no further delegation of recruitment authority has taken place. In January 2003, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations issued the Lotus Notes-based electronic "Human Resources Handbook", drawing extensively from a similar handbook previously issued by the Office of Human Resources Management on the United Nations Intranet. Compiling the handbook is a commendable effort in that it provides all missions with convenient access to rules, regulations and procedures pertaining to personnel matters. However, the recruitment policies and procedures prepared by the Department and included in the handbook are still in draft form. Furthermore, the Personnel Management and Support Service needs to frame appropriate policy guidelines on geographic distribution and gender balance and provide training to mission civilian personnel officers to enable field missions to exercise the delegation of authority responsibly and effectively. These guidelines have to be finalized in conjunction with the provision of adequate training to field mission civilian personnel officers to ensure the meaningful delegation of recruitment authority. In the opinion of OIOS, there has only been limited progress in creating the conditions for greater delegation of recruitment authority to field missions, and much more remains to be done. In order to achieve this strategic goal, the Personnel Management and Support Service should set specific targets and time frames, identifying the missions to which recruitment authority will be delegated in a phased manner (recommendation 4).

D. Diversifying the sources of recruitment

20. The global staffing strategy also recognized the need to diversify the sources of field staff recruitment, and accordingly envisaged entering into agreements to formalize relationships within the United Nations common system and with Member States. Although the global Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations Volunteers was to be signed by 31 August 2001, the agreement was not finalized until January 2004. OIOS noted that in September 2002, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to strengthen and expand mutual cooperation. The two entities agreed to consult at the planning stage of peacekeeping operations, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human

Rights will participate in integrated mission task forces. This arrangement should facilitate the efficient deployment of human rights officers in field missions, as needed in the future. With regard to establishing Memoranda of Understanding with Member States, the United Nations Controller cleared a generic agreement in March 2003, which has not yet been distributed to Member States. OIOS concluded that considerable effort is required to implement standing arrangements for the deployment of civilian specialists to field missions (recommendation 5). *The Department of Peacekeeping Operations commented that Member States would be engaged shortly, utilizing a generic memorandum of understanding, to assist in the development of a civilian stand-by system.*

E. Rapid deployment

21. The staffing strategy called for the development of plans for the rapid deployment of pre-screened and pre-cleared staff, essentially in the form of standby teams for initial mission assessment, followed by start-up teams and then longer-term deployment. To that end, three rapid deployment standby teams and three mission start-up teams were to be created. The Personnel Management and Support Service established a rapid deployment roster consisting of three teams of 120 staff members, who could be deployed immediately for up to 90 days in a new mission before returning to their respective parent duty stations. The 90-day rapid deployment phase would be used to recruit and deploy full-time staff for the new mission. However, the OIOS review of the rapid deployment roster showed that the availability of many staff members was listed as "doubtful". As such, it was of little use to retain the names of these staff members on the roster. OIOS believes that all staff members listed on the roster should be available for rapid deployment whenever the need arises. The Personnel Management and Support Service should regularly review and update the roster by removing and/or replacing the names of those staff members who are unavailable (recommendation 6).

IV. Management of the recruitment function

A. Benchmarking and performance evaluation

22. The July 2001 OIOS report recommended that the Personnel Management and Support Service develop benchmarks in consultation with the Office of Human Resources Management for assessing the efficiency of recruiting civilian staff to fill mission vacancies. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations is still in the process of implementing this recommendation. The Department has developed benchmarks regarding the number of days for filling a mission vacancy, but related activities, such as expanding the use of Galaxy for mission recruitment, are to be completed by June 2004. A realistic assessment of efficiency in recruiting international staff for mission posts based on benchmarks would be feasible only after these activities are completed.

B. Use of information technology

23. The Information Management Unit within the Personnel Management and Support Service coordinates the Service's information technology requirements. The Unit defines requirements and enhancements to the Service's Intranet/Internet roster, the Galaxy project, the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS), the field personnel management system and other electronic systems for sharing information and monitoring delegation of authority to the field.

24. The Unit has implemented a data warehouse project, subsequently renamed "Nucleus", by creating a database containing data extracted from IMIS, the field personnel management system, and the "peacekeeping database" previously used by the Service. The pooling of personnel data from these various systems generally facilitates the processing of personnel actions pertaining to internationally recruited staff assigned to field missions. However, OIOS is concerned that the data security protocols built into IMIS have not been replicated in "Nucleus".

25. For example, in IMIS, Personnel Management and Support Service personnel officers have access to data on all staff members in the Secretariat, regardless of whether or not the staff member is assigned to peacekeeping operations at Headquarters or in the field. OIOS was informed that the Personnel Management and Support Service was given such unrestricted access to IMIS in order to expedite processing of extensions of fixed-term appointments of Headquarters staff assigned to field missions. By logging into "Nucleus", it is possible for the user to view human resources data on any staff member in the Secretariat, including those who are not assigned to peacekeeping operations. Since the Department of Peacekeeping Operations intends to provide access to "Nucleus" to civilian personnel officers in the field in conjunction with the gradual delegation of authority to missions, the data security protocols built into IMIS would be compromised if they are not replicated in "Nucleus" to prevent field users from accessing restricted data. OIOS believes that the Personnel Management and Support Service needs to immediately address the question of data access privileges in "Nucleus" in relation to the IMIS controls. The Service also needs to ensure that any system developed in the future by extracting data from other systems invariably inherits the data access restrictions of the parent systems (recommendation 7). *The Department of Peacekeeping Operations stated that it will incorporate the required IMIS-type restricted access to personnel data to ensure that field users of "Nucleus" will be able to run data enquiries only on staff members in their own missions. The module establishing these controls is currently being tested, and the implementation of "Nucleus" in the field is planned to take place by June 2005.*

26. As part of the "Nucleus" system, the Information Management Unit developed roster management and vacancy control modules. The vacancy control module has been integrated with the Galaxy system. If both of these systems are utilized to their full potential, they could contribute to efficiency gains in recruitment. Combined with greater delegation of authority to field missions, these efficiency gains should lead to a review of staffing structures in the Personnel Management and Support Service for appropriate resizing based on workload analysis.

C. Staff resources

27. The earlier OIOS audit indicated that although the Personnel Management and Support Service attributed many of the problems identified to the lack of adequate staffing, the Service had been provided with the staff resources it had requested during the period from 1995 to 2000. Subsequently, in order to develop the necessary capacities for implementing the recommendations of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, the Service's staff resources, including those for functions other than field recruitment, had been increased in January 2002 to a total of 115 posts, compared with 71 posts as at June 2000 (see table).

Personnel Management and Support Service staff resources from 1995 to 2002

Year	*Professional*	*General Service*	*Total*
1995/96	17	45	62
1996/97	20	45	65
1997/98	20	45	65
1998/99	17	45	62
1999/00	23	48	71
2000/01	30	56	86
2001/02	46	69	115

28. Notwithstanding the additional staff resources provided to the Service during the 2000 to 2002 period, considerable work remains to be done in human resources planning, streamlining the recruitment process, screening applications for inclusion in the Internet/Intranet-based roster, expanding the sources of recruitment and delegating authority to field missions. In the opinion of OIOS, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations needs to formulate a realistic schedule for completing all of these tasks, for which the concerned managers of the Personnel Management and Support Service should be held accountable. The efficiency gains resulting from implementing new information technology systems and the delegation of recruitment authority to field missions, should lead to resizing the Service's staffing structures based on reliable workload statistics (recommendation 8).

V. Recommendations[2]

29. OIOS made the following recommendations on the basis of its follow-up audit of the policies and procedures for recruiting international civilian staff for field missions. Comments received from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Office of Human Resources Management, as well as the recommendations' implementation status, are summarized below each recommendation.

[2] The symbols in parentheses in this section refer to an internal code used by OIOS for recording recommendations.

Recommendation 1

30. The Office of Human Resources Management should strengthen its monitoring of the recruitment actions taken by the Personnel Management and Support Service, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, to ensure that delegated recruitment authority is exercised in accordance with the Organization's policies (AP2003/600/03/1).

31. *The Office of Human Resources Management accepted the recommendation and stated that several steps have been undertaken or are envisaged to be undertaken to strengthen its monitoring activities. These include: (a) weekly meetings with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to provide assistance and find solutions to specific recruitment problems; (b) on-site monitoring of the Personnel Management and Support Service; (c) self-monitoring tools to identify and correct deviations from policies and/or procedures; (d) launch of a planning, monitoring and reporting web site covering mission vacancies; and (e) training of Department of Peacekeeping Operations recruitment officers.* Recommendation 1 will remain open in the OIOS recommendations database until it has been fully implemented by the Office of Human Resources Management.

Recommendation 2

32. The Office of Human Resources Management should: (a) ensure that the Personnel Management and Support Service, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, strictly enforces the policy guidance on converting mission appointments from the Field Service to the Professional category; and (b) examine the Department of Peacekeeping Operations' practice of treating successive mission appointments as independent of one another, and provide appropriate policy guidance to ensure that the Department's recruitment practices are consistent with the Organization's policies (AP2003/600/03/2).

33. *The Office of Human Resources Management accepted the recommendation and stated that interim guidelines on conversion of staff of the Field Service category to the Professional category have been promulgated since March 2004. With regard to successive mission appointments, the Office stated that this had been discussed with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and a policy paper will be prepared on the matter.* Recommendation 2 will remain open in the OIOS database until the policy on successive mission appointments is promulgated.

Recommendation 3

34. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations, in consultation with the Office of Human Resources Management, should resolve the problems concerning the Galaxy system, such as its inability to electronically sort and select candidates on the basis of specific criteria with a view to ensuring that field missions: (a) have full access to candidates' applications for various mission posts; and (b) are provided with the capability to process recruitment actions for mission posts through the system (AP2003/600/03/3).

35. *The Department of Peacekeeping Operations accepted the recommendation and stated that, in consultation with the Galaxy development team within the Office*

of Human Resources Management, an additional functionality had been established in the system that would facilitate staff recruitment for field missions. In March 2004, a new Galaxy workflow was designed to allow for systematic advertisement of field mission vacancies on Galaxy. With the required training for posting vacancy announcements and conducting electronic searches, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations expects to streamline the field recruitment process through Galaxy by early 2005, which will replace the current practice of advertising mission vacancies on the Department's web site. Recommendation 3 will remain open in the OIOS database until field missions are provided access to the Galaxy system for processing recruitment actions.

Recommendation 4

36. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations, in consultation with the Office of Human Resources Management, should develop policy guidelines on geographical distribution and gender balance so as to enable field missions to exercise the delegation of recruitment authority responsibly and effectively. The Department should also set specific targets and time frames, identifying the missions to which recruitment authority would be delegated in a phased manner (AP2003/600/03/4).

37. *The Office of Human Resources Management commented that it intends to introduce human resources action plans in field missions on a systematic basis, starting with the established missions on an experimental basis in 2004. These human resources action plans would contain three human resources indicators: vacancy rate, geographical distribution and gender balance. The Office also stated that the introduction of targets for equitable geographical distribution and gender balance in field missions would require it to work in close coordination with the Personnel Management and Support Service and the concerned field mission especially for the definition of implementation modalities.*

38. *With regard to delegation of recruitment authority to field missions, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations commented that at present, no additional delegation of authority is anticipated owing to the requirement to maintain a global and strategic perspective in managing the surge in staffing requirements in the field. Any delegation would also be contingent upon the promulgation of field recruitment procedures and subsequent training of mission personnel. The decision to delegate recruitment authority will also take into account the results of the in-depth analysis of the experiences gained from delegation of authority to UNMIK and UNTAET/UNMISET on a pilot basis.* Recommendation 4 will remain open in the OIOS database until the Office of Human Resources Management develops policy guidelines for equitable geographical distribution and gender balance in field missions, and until the Department of Peacekeeping Operations provides specific targets and time frames for delegation of recruitment authority to field missions in accordance with the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/977, paras. 161 and 162).

Recommendation 5

39. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations should finalize standing arrangements with Member States for the deployment of civilian specialists in field missions through institutional relationships (AP2003/600/03/5).

40. *The Department of Peacekeeping Operations accepted the recommendation and stated that it expects to conclude negotiations on the generic memorandum of understanding with Member States by December 2004.* Recommendation 5 will remain open in the OIOS database pending conclusion of the memorandum of understanding.

Recommendation 6

41. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations should regularly review and update the rapid deployment roster by removing and/or replacing the names of those staff members who are declared to be unavailable (AP2003/600/03/6).

42. *The Department of Peacekeeping Operations accepted the recommendation and stated that the rapid deployment roster, which had first been utilized for deploying staff to the peacekeeping missions in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, was being reviewed taking into consideration the experiences learned. A revised rapid deployment roster was expected to be available in the latter part of 2004.* Recommendation 6 will remain open in the OIOS database pending the finalization of the updated roster.

Recommendation 7

43. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations should take immediate steps to ensure that data access restrictions pertaining to the "Nucleus" system do not compromise the IMIS data security protocols. The Department should also ensure that any systems developed in the future by extracting data from other systems invariably inherit the data access restrictions of the parent systems (AP2003/600/03/7).

44. *The Department of Peacekeeping Operations accepted the recommendation and stated that it would be implemented within the staffing table planning and management module of the "Nucleus" system, which is expected to be completed by 30 June 2005. Until then, access to the data warehouse module of "Nucleus" will be limited to personnel officers of the Personnel Management and Support Service with Headquarters-wide access to IMIS.* Recommendation 7 remains open in the OIOS database pending its full implementation by the Department.

Recommendation 8

45. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations should: (a) formulate a time-bound programme to realize the efficiency gains resulting from implementing new information technology systems and from providing increased delegations of authority to field missions; and (b) review the Personnel Management and Support

Service staffing levels to assess the need for appropriate resizing based on reliable workload statistics (AP2003/600/03/8).

46. ***The Department of Peacekeeping Operations commented that full implementation of the new Galaxy workflow designed for the Personnel Management and Support Service, as well as the use of the roster database in "Nucleus", were expected to facilitate streamlining of the recruitment process. The Service would closely monitor the impact of the ensuing changes on its staffing needs, taking into account the overall increase in peacekeeping operations. Efficiency gains would provide the Service the capacity it needed to accomplish many of the delayed tasks.*** **Recommendation 8 will remain open in the OIOS database until the Department of Peacekeeping Operations provides a plan for further delegation of authority to field missions, as well as documentation to show that staffing levels of the Personnel Management and Support Service have been reassessed accordingly based on workload.**

(*Signed*) **Dileep Nair**
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